

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, August 30, 1995

Who Was Colonel Briggs Alden?

Duxbury has many legendary figures, one of which is Colonel Briggs Alden. A descendent of Pilgrim John Alden, Colonel Briggs Alden received the Alden Farm in 1757 from his brother Samuel. During his lifetime he served both the interests of Duxbury and the citizens of Massachusetts. His first public service was delicate. He was asked to smooth out the differences between the parish and the minister, The Rev. Samuel Veazie.

For some years there had been increasing dissatisfaction with the content of the Reverend's sermons. The Rev. Veazie made little or no effort to conform to the parish's wishes. Committees were formed to deal with the situation, but it was not until Briggs Alden got involved that the situation was rectified by dismissing the Reverend. Proving his ability to handle delicate matters the town again looked to him when the parish was divided over the decision to build a new meeting hall or enlarge the existing one. After much debate it was decided to enlarge the existing hall and hire The Rev. Charles Turner.

Free of parish matters Briggs moved onto civic responsibilities. In 1758 he was elected moderator of town meetings beginning his lifetime as a civil servant. He was a representative of the General Court, when tensions were high in Duxbury over the taxes imposed by the Stamp Act. Due to his reports Duxbury was marked as a town of discontent. In 1767, Briggs Alden, Captain Wait Wadsworth and Ezra Arnold were involved in a dispute over grazing rights on Duxbury Beach with General John Winslow and Colonel Anthony Thomas of Marshfield. Duxbury felt that the grazing would destroy the beach and the 2 Marshfield men did not own the rights to the beach. Duxbury won, it was judged by committee that Winslow and Thomas's claim was not valid and the matter was dropped, thus striking a win for early conservation.

Briggs Alden made many more contributions to the welfare of Duxbury before his death in 1796.

Visitors can learn more about Colonel Briggs Alden and the American Revolution during a special tour offered by the Winslow House of Marshfield and the Alden House of Duxbury. On Sept. 3, the 2 museums will present "Friends to Foes," a 3-1/2 hour tour focusing on the change in friendship between the Winslows and the Aldens during the first 100 years the houses were lived in. In the 1600's, the 2 families worked together on the plantation and within 6 generations, the families were on opposite sides of the American Revolution. Come and experience the fun! Tours begin at 10 and 2. Admission is \$9.50 per person. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the John Alden House Museum.

The John Alden House Museum, at 105 Alden St., is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday, 10 to 5.

To get to the John Alden House from Rte. 3, get off Exit 10 and head east on Rte. 3A. Follow to Alden St. in Duxbury and take a right; the museum will be a 1/4 mile down on the right